William Wallace:

OR,

THE HIGHLAND HERO.

A TALE,

FOUNDED ON HISTORICAL FACTS.

By HENRY SIDDONS,

AUTHOR OF MODERN BREAKFAST.

Arma virumque cano. VIRG.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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DEDICATION,

(By Permiſſion.)

To the Right Honourable

THOMAS ERSKINE.

SIR,

IT is a difficult taſk to expreſs the warm effuſions of gratitude, without degenerating into a ſervile flattery. I will not then incur ſo odious a ſuſpicion, by tediouſly re-

counting what the world ſo fully *knows*, and truly *feels*. I therefore, Sir, confine my proteſtations to your kindneſs to me when a *mere child*; ſince which time I have received the higheſt honour from the notice you have been pleaſed to confer upon me, A ROUGH, UNPOLISHED SCHOOL-BOY. Unworthy of your regard is the return I here offer; yet I ſubmiſſively entreat your protection of the following little hiſtory; whoſe only conſequence it *can* receive, will be the ſanction of your name. If it has

the

the happineſs to afford you a *moment's* amuſement, every end will be *gratified* of,

SIR,

Your moſt obliged,

humble Servant,

HENRY SIDDONS.

Charterhouſe,
1791.

PREFACE.

To uſher a book into the world, like a play, almoſt indiſpenſably requires a few preceding lines, to ſupplicate the mercy of the auditors or readers. My confidence gives way as the approach of my hero to the public eye draws near. I cannot help taking up the pen, to ſay a few words in my own behalf, by way of introduction to the enſuing Tale.

The ingenious author of Tom Jones likens a writer to the honeſt inn-

inn-keeper, who preſents every traveller with a bill of fare, that he may be able to accept or reject whatever he approves or diſlikes. For this purpoſe he has placed a few humorous lines at the beginning of every chapter, that his reader may be informed of the diſh he is going to taſte.

I ſhould myſelf be happy to purſue the plan of ſo great a genius, did not one grand point obſtruct my wiſhes; viz. his happy art of garniſhing the ſimpleſt article with the moſt delicious ſauce. Thus ſituated, I muſt plead inability as my excuſe;

excuſe; and, like the plain honeſt tradeſman, give my gueſts all their repaſt at one view. I therefore think it my duty to give a hint to all novel-reading young ladies, that I am afraid theſe volumes will make but a ſorry meal; as I am not yet *refined* enough to devote nature in caricature, or paint thoſe ſoft languiſhing pictures of love which, to my young and inexperienced (perhaps ſome may term it *unfeeling*) mind, I muſt confeſs are moſt extremely tireſome and inſipid. Theſe ſheets were written for thoſe who value the rich ſenſations of nature, and ſympathiſe more with

ſorrows which they know to contain *ſome* foundation, than all the fictitious diſtreſs of a circulating library. And if I am fortunate enough to draw a tear from the eye, or a ſigh from the heart of a truly generous and feeling mind, I ſhall prize my little attempt more than if I had gained an immortal reputation in the art of

MODERN NOVEL-WRITING.

ADVERTISEMENT.

To avoid the diſguſt of thoſe who are verſed in the Hiſtory of the Hero whom I have choſen for the ſubject of my little trifle, I think it neceſſary candidly to confeſs, that I have not adhered ſtrictly to exact circumſtances. Every deviation, therefore, which may occur, I hope will be conſidered as proceeding, not from the *ignorance*, but *deſign* of the Author.

William Wallace:

OR,

THE HIGHLAND HERO.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

WILLIAM WALLACE, the brave, though unfortunate, hero of the following ſheets, traced his origin from a race of illuſtrious heroes, who had, at different periods

of hiſtory, at the expence of their lives, ratified their own fame, by dying to preſerve that of their native country.

Iſabella, the wife of a brave and noble Highlander, in vain attempted, by tears and intreaties, to recall her inexorable lord from the dangers of the battle. Wallace, when his country ſlumbered in the luxurious arms of peace, far from diſdaining, would make it the chief ſtudy of his life, to gratify the wiſhes of his Iſabella; and no one who ſaw him tenderly preſs his infant to his breaſt, would have ſuſ-

pected the manly heart that vibrated within it.

" What!" cried he, " when the " tyrant Edward leads his victo- " rious army to our very gates, " ſhall I refuſe to join the cauſe " of liberty? No, Iſabella, unwor- " thy ſhould I prove me of its " bleſſings, if I had not a heart to " defend them."

Iſabella could not help admiring the valour that oppoſed her wiſhes; and, ſighing, began to prepare that repaſt, which her prophetic heart told her would be the laſt ſhe was

ever doomed alone to enjoy with her beloved huſband.

Wallace ſeemed to eye every thing in his cottage with a peculiar attention; ſpite of all his efforts, a ſigh would riſe, and it was impoſſible to prevent a tear from ſtarting; he was forced to retire to reſt, that he might hide the keenneſs of his feelings; and his unhappy conſort paſſed the night in tears and lamentations.

The morning of Wallace's departure was beautiful in the extreme: the riſing ſun glittered upon the

the lake, guſhing through the bottom of the rock which ſupported their humble habitation; the opening bloſſoms on the trees were loaded with the ſhining dew, and the birds ſeemed to exert their little throats, to make the laſt morning of their kind protector as pleaſing to him as poſſible.

Wallace roſe, refreſhed and inſpired; and even the countenance of Iſabella was adorned with ſmiles: till, on a ſudden, the door flew open, and the whole room was in an inſtant filled with armed Highlanders. Wallace flew to embrace

them; a ruſtic banquet greeted the fatigued ſoldiers; and each began to give his opinion of the cauſe they were entering upon, and conſulted the beſt meaſures for their march.

Iſabella, ſcorning to be outdone, reſolved not to let her conduct be leſs heroic than that of her huſband; and though her heart was burſting, yet ſhe veiled the clouds of deſpair with an apparent ſunſhine. Wallace was charmed with her behaviour, and exulted in having his friends ſpectators of her fortitude. At length, the leader of the clan pro-

pronounced the dreadful words of ſeparation, and the colour fled from the cheeks of Iſabella: a look of indignation from her lord, rouſed her in an inſtant from her lethargy; and ſhe led her young William by the hand, to take his laſt farewel of his heroic father.

The boy's eyes gleamed with tranſport, when he beheld the martial train that every where ſurrounded him. His father's cottage ſeemed a heaven, and he gazed with wonder on the warriors, who were admiring him; he ſtood pe-

triſied with pleaſure and aſtoniſhment, till his brave father caught him in his arms, and ſuffered a tear to trickle from his own manly countenance upon the face of his boy; then, aſſuming a manly and majeſtic air, deſired his comrades would indulge him in a few moments converſation with his ſon in private.

William, who had always ſeen his father's countenance beaming with love and tenderneſs, felt his little heart tremble at the ſullen air he then aſſumed. "William," cried

cried Wallace, pointing to an old cupboard, "open that cloſet." William, with all his force, tugged at the handle, and forced it open. —"There," cried Wallace, pointing to a ſword that hung ſuſpended on a ruſty nail, "behold, my "child, the only gift that I have "to bequeath thee: with that I "have carved my paſſage to an "honourable ſubſiſtence; take it, "and revere it; for it has been, "from father down to ſon, the "guardian of our family; and "if you ever turn from honour, "even in your *thoughts*, let the "ſight of that venerable inſtru-

"ment

" ment call to your cheek the
" bluſh of ſelf-conviction."

The youthful William bowed his head in token of obedience: his father tenderly embraced him. " There is but one thing more," exclaimed the hero; " and if I " fall, conſcious of your integrity " in performing it, I ſhall defy the " blunted ſhaft of death."

" Tell me," exclaimed the youth; " O quickly let me hear it!" " Be-" fore I die," reſumed the father, " ſwear, never meanly to bow down " thy head to any ſovereign from the

" realm

" realm of England; but ſtand, like " me, a friend to liberty, and a fixed " enemy to baſe ſubmiſſion." The ſtripling, in a rapture, kiſſed his parent's hand, and, bending over the ſword, (entruſted to his care,) took the moſt ſolemn oaths, religiouſly to follow the early precepts that he had inſtilled in him.

Wallace, tranſported, poured down a thouſand bleſſings on his head; and, flying to his wife, caught her in his arms, breathed a parting kiſs upon her cheek, whoſe natural roſes were in an inſtant overſpread with deadly paleneſs,

neſs. He gazed with rapture on the beauties of his wife, and called up his reſolution at that moment to relinquiſh her; then, joining his brave companions, ſoon left his ſtraw-thatched cottage many miles behind him.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

A LINGERING illneſs ſeized the hapleſs Iſabella. In vain did her aſſiduous William try every method of conſoling her. Alas! cold were her faculties to all his little attentions. At the time when his mother lay embraced in the arms of ſleep, (which happened but too ſeldom,) the young hero would ruminate on his father's laſt words, gaze on the ſword, and, at laſt, mount to ſuch a pitch of military

frenzy,

frenzy, that at times he reſolved to deſert the cottage, and follow his brave father to the dangers of the battle; but then, to leave his mother in her illneſs, that was a thought he could by no means bear. The lenient hand of time ſoothed at length the grief that had uſurped the breaſt of Iſabella, and her countenance recovered gradually the tints of roſy health and innocence.

Her huſband now had left her four long years, during which time the news of many victories gained by the Scottiſh forces over the Engliſh

liſh troops had reached her ear. She ſometimes hoped he would be ſoon returning rich in his only treaſure Honour, and crowned with conquering laurels. But then again, her fears for his ſafety would agitate her tender frame ſo forcibly, that William, unable to ſupport her painful anxiety, reſolved himſelf to gain ſome certain tidings of his father's fortunes.

Though only ſixteen, the figure of William was manly above his years; he was tall, and of a commanding countenance, and had a mind that deſpiſed any undertaking which

which was not attended with difficulties. Therefore the mountains that oppoſed him in his journey to the Scottiſh camp, were rather *ſpurs* than *detriments* to his deſign.

It was but two days journey to the camp; therefore, to lull all fear in the breaſt of his indulgent mother, he intreated permiſſion to viſit a ſick friend; and, as ſhe could not bear to thwart his wiſhes in any thing, he began his dangerous journey, one evening, when the moon had riſen as red as blood, in a ſky whoſe immenſe clouds ſeemed to imitate the bulky billows of a troubled ocean. Before

fore he left the cottage, he had armed himſelf with the ſword which had been ſo awfully preſented to him; and taking a ſhield from the armory of his anceſtors, ſallied forth, like a blooming Telemachus, in purſuit of an aged Ulyſſes.

As he purſued his courſe, muſing on what road he had beſt ſtrike forward, and admiring the beautiful ſerenity of the moon, which was emerging at one inſtant from ſome broken cloud, and buried the next in obſcurity; while his thoughts were employed in this manner, the piercing ſhriek of diſ-

treſs vibrated upon his ear. Fear for a while deprived him of his reaſon; but his ſword gleaming with a ray of the moon, which at that inſtant glanced upon its hilt, he recalled to his memory the precepts of his father; and, drawing it from its ſcabbard, darted like lightning to the ſpot from whence the ſound proceeded: there he beheld a venerable ſoldier bending beneath the weight of a ſturdy ruffian, who was brandiſhing his ſword above his head, to finiſh the exiſtence of his deſpairing captive. Young Wallace was of a pliant active make; therefore, with a ſpring,

a ſpring, he ruſhed forward, and received the ſtroke of the barbarian upon his ſhield; then, turning nimbly round, pierced the villain, with his fatal weapon, to the heart.

The old man, lifting up his eyes to heaven, ſeeing the aſſaſſin fall and expire, gazed anxiouſly upon William. "Ah!" cried he, "my "friend! have you diſpatched the "other villain?—Oh, no! it is "not my companion! Are you too "come to murder me?"

William aſſured the laird M'Dowal (ſuch it ſeems was his title) of the purity of his intentions; and begged to be favoured with the circumſtances which had concurred to render him ſo fortunate as to have had the honour of preſerving him.

"You have a right," ſaid he, "to know the hiſtory, which, on "my honour, is but briefly this: "I have been fighting for ſome "time againſt the power of Eng-"land; but, longing to behold a "youthful daughter, I obtained a "licence

" licence of abſence for a month,
" and hired a guide to conduct
" me; who, taking advantage of
" this lonely ſituation, would, if
" it had not been for your gallant
" interference, both have rifled and
" murdered me. The fellow, I
" believe, had no ſuch idea, till
" he ſaw two others, on a rock at
" ſome diſtance, attempt the ſame
" upon another gentleman."

William expreſſed ſome concern for this ſtranger's fate; but his anxiety was diſſipated by the laird, who aſſured him, he ſaw him get the better of them both. And

though he ſuſpected the villains had wounded him, yet he remembered to have ſeen the ſtranger making his way briſkly along the hills.

M'Dowal preſſed young William to accompany him to his houſe, to which, as the night was bleak and rainy, he conſented, after much perſuaſion. Their converſation on the road was pleaſantly inſtructing; and our young hero, when he mentioned his birth, was tranſported to find he had fallen in with a warm and intimate friend of his father's. M'Dowal found arguments

ments to diſſuade him from proſe-cuting his journey to the camp; and aſſured him, that he had left his father, ſince the laſt battle, well, and in perfect ſpirits. Juſt as William had agreed to make a few days ſtay with his new com-panion, they arrived at the door, which was immediately opened; and the hoſpitable roof of M'Dowal received the preſerver of its maſ-ter. An elegant repaſt was placed before his eyes, and a univerſal glow of happineſs poſſeſſed the bo-ſom of our hero.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE daughter of M'Dowal, a beautiful girl of ſixteen, ſoon made her appearance. Her father tenderly embraced her; and, taking William by the hand, introduced him to her as the preſerver of his life. She received him with that affability with which an amiable woman wins every beholder. Devoid of affectation, ſhe kiſſed his hand, and thanked him for the greateſt gift fate could bleſs her with

with—her father. They then ſat down to their collation. There was every thing calculated to invite the appetite of young Wallace; and yet he ſeemed to loath the plenty that ſurrounded him. M'Dowal was afraid his entertainment wanted ſplendour to entice him: but the thoughts of our young hero were rivetted upon a far ſuperior object:—the ſparkling eyes of the divine Matilda had ſtirred up a commotion in his breaſt, to which, till that inſtant, he had been an entire ſtranger. He gazed upon her with admiration and aſtoniſhment. When la-

bour,

bour, anxiety, every circumſtance, ſeemed to conſpire to have invited him to ſound and ſweet repoſe, his ſlumbers were ſhort and interrupted: ſleeping or waking, ſtill the form of Matilda appeared inceſſantly before him.

Nor was the boſom of the daughter of the noble laird entirely at its eaſe. She ſaw the beauties of the lovely ſtranger; and preferred his unaffected gentle manners of converſation, to all the youthful nobles, who, attracted by her charms, were daily fluttering round her; and yet, aſhamed to own her artleſs

leſs paſſion, ſhe grew ſad and penſive; nor could M'Dowal, for a time, diſcover the cauſe of their mutual alteration: till, at length, his young friend appeared before him, pale and emaciated, his eyes ſwoln and red with weeping.

"I muſt quit you," cried he, "my friend: allured by the charms "of your angelic daughter, I have "exceeded the time I propoſed re- "ſiding here. I have loſt my "peace; but I have no one to "accuſe; for I have madly drawn "my wretchedneſs upon my own "head. I ſhould have ſtifled the

"embers

" embers of the flame which now
" conſumes me, and torn myſelf
" from the contemplation of beau-
" ties it is impoſſible I can ever be
" worthy to poſſeſs."

M'Dowal here told him to take comfort; that he ſhould be proud in owning him as a ſon-in-law, who had ſo bravely hazarded his life to ſerve him: and, on converſing with his daughter, found her ſo charmed with Wallace, that our hero, tranſported at the bliſsful intelligence, earneſtly intreated to be united to her directly. But M'Dowal here ſet forth the im-

impropriety of ſuch an early match; promiſing him that, when a year was elapſed, with the conſent of Iſabella, they ſhould crown their inclinations at the altar. This hint, towards his mother, operated like a thunderbolt upon the mind of Wallace: he had been ſo charmed with Matilda, that he had forgot the anxiety of his tender parent: he curſed his ingratitude, for returning all her anxieties for his good, in ſo unjuſt a manner; and reſolved to make her every poſſible atonement, by ſpurring his horſe, and ſtraining every nerve, to reach,

as

as ſoon as poſſible, the cottage of his mother.

The hapleſs youth, unconſcious of the wretchedneſs that fate was treaſuring up for him, ſpent the hours of his journey in the moſt pleaſing reflections on the happineſs he was in future to enjoy, bleſſed with the ſociety of his amiable Matilda. On his arrival at the door of his cottage, he was ſeized with a ſudden unaccountable trembling; when a faithful old domeſtic of the family opened the door. He inquired, in a faultering accent, if his

his father was there? The ſervant ſeemed to ſtammer, and heſitate: but, at length, anſwered in the affirmative. Overpowered with joy, he ruſhed up to the chamber of his long-loſt parent. But, mighty Heaven! what were his ſenſations, when he beheld the body of his father, ſtretched lifeleſs at full length, in a coffin. Surprize a while deprived him of his faculties, and the drop of horror burſt forth from his forehead: he ſtood gazing in a fixed poſture on the terrific ſight before his eyes; and madneſs might have been the immediate conſequence, had not a groan from the

interior chamber recalled his ſcattered ſenſes: when, O diſtreſsful ſight! he ſaw his fond indulgent mother gaſping in the laſt agonies of death. He flew to the bedſide, and, graſping her burning hand, gazed on her with a look of frenzy and aſtoniſhment. At length, a ſhower of tears came to his relief, and he acquired juſt power enough to pronounce the word, "mother!" The expiring ſaint, rouzed at the well-known ſound, raiſed her head, and whiſpered forth a bleſſing on her boy: then pointed to a letter that was laid upon the table. A tear gliſtened

tened in her eye; ſhe ſeemed to ſtrain for the laſt ſight of its beloved object—waved her hand —and then ſunk to reſt for ever.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

WALLACE (for he muſt now go by no other name) fell in a ſwoon upon the bed of his mother; and, on his recovery, found himſelf with Agnes, the above-noted faithful companion of the ſorrows of her miſtreſs. The letter lay before him. "Yes! honoured ſhades of "thoſe who gave me being," cried the unfortunate orphan, "let me "explore how beſt I may fulfil "your laſt commands!" He took

the letter, and, after having almoſt drenched it with his tears, broke open the ſeal, and read as follows:

" *Beloved William*,

" LOST to theſe aching eyes, I " fear for ever, I will not call you " unkind; becauſe I am certain, " that, whatever cauſe you had " for leaving me, you eſteemed it " honourable;—but, deſerted and " alone, it was not kind of you: " —but of that no more. Since " you quitted me, ſtrange events " have happened, enough to turn " my brain:—one night, as by the

" blue taper I ſat deploring your
" (I could not help terming it un-
" kind) departure, the well-known
" form of your lamented father on a
" ſudden aſſailed my aſtoniſhed eye:
" but, ah! how altered from the gal-
" lant youth who left theſe arms
" to fight the cauſe of Scotland;
" breathleſs and pale he ſtaggered
" in before me—uttered a groan—
" and fell upon the couch. I
" ſcreamed for help; but, ah! his
" words confirmed the fatal truth,
" that all relief was vain. He had
" obtained permiſſion of his gene-
" ral to pay a viſit to his hapleſs
" wife; but, in the way, his guides

" attacked

" attacked and baſely wounded
" him. He had the poor ſatis-
" faction of making their lives an-
" ſwer for their inhumanity."—

" Heavens!" cried Wallace;
" then my *father* was the ſtranger
" whom M'Dowal ſaw attacked!
" No wonder that I felt an inte-
" reſt in his fate!" The letter continued:

—" He had barely ſtrength to
" reel to this ſpot, where, oppreſſed
" with his wounds, he fainted.
" Reviving, all his words were
" full of love and tenderneſs: he

" prayed that fate would lengthen
" your days; but, at the ſame time,
" begged, you might never live to
" be *diſhonoured;* and truſted, that
" you would welcome *death*, ra-
" ther than deſert the quarrel of
" your country:—he died bleſſing
" us. What a change has a few
" days occaſioned in us all? I
" feel, my beloved William, that
" I am hourly deſtined to ap-
" proach, with rapid ſtrides, that
" *grave*, where fate can never di-
" vide us. My illneſs is fatal; and
" if I never more am doomed to
" be enlivened with your preſence,
" O! may that Power who throws

" his

" his guardian buckler out to ſhield
" the innocent, protect thee from
" miſeries ſimilar to thoſe of thy
" affectionate,

" *Though unhappy, Mother.*"

Young William here tore his hair; and, in the moſt frantic fury, curſed the charms of that ſeducing beauty which had prevented him from paying the laſt duty to a kind father; and, perhaps, preſerving the life of an indulgent mother. And though the violence of his paſſion, in ſome degree, abated, yet he ſunk into a deep and rooted melancholy, if poſſible, more horrid than all his rav-

ings. His food grew loathſome to him, his eyes ſavage, and his perſon uncultivated. On ſtormy nights he would ſleep among the wild inhabitants of the mountains; and, by degrees, was forced to be confined, as dangerous, both to himſelf and to ſociety in general. At one inſtant he would rave againſt England, and its king; fancying himſelf at the head of an army, putting their forces to flight; then recover his ſenſes, in a more perfect degree, ſigh, and ſing tender and melancholy verſes in the praiſe of his Matilda.

She,

She, poor girl! waiting for two long years, began at length to doubt her hero's conſtancy; and might, out of reſentment, have beſtowed her hand on another, had not the calamity of Wallace reached her ears by the following means:

Amongſt the foremoſt of the admirers of Matilda, ſtood a youth named Arran, proud, ignorant, ſubtle, cruel, and malicious. He had heard, with envy, the praiſes of Wallace rehearſed by his diſdainful miſtreſs; for his heart was not a ſecret to her; her penetrating eye diſcover-

ed

ed his arrogance, which ſhe reſolved to mortify.

Stung to the ſoul with jealouſy, Arran vowed, from that inſtant, to let ſlip no future opportunity of ruining the views of this ſucceſsful rival. The news of William's malady ſoon reached his ears; and, hoping that it would determine his miſtreſs to renounce all thoughts of him, he, with the malice of a dæmon, informed her of her favourite's misfortune.

She

She was moved indeed; but, Oh! how greatly different were her feelings from thoſe the monſter wiſhed her to poſſeſs! She treated with diſdain the ſhameful ſubterfuge; and left the vile informer to a conſcience racked with remorſe, ſhame, pride, and indignation.

Affections too ſtrong for the feeble voice of prudence, determined the lovely Matilda to ſeek immediately the habitation of the unfortunate Wallace, and pour the balm of love and comfort in his wounded heart. Her father in vain attempted to ſubdue her reſolution; but finding

finding all his advice of no avail, and being certain that ſhe never would overſtep the bounds of modeſty, at length complied with her requeſt.

Accompanied by two faithful ſervants, whom her father had commanded to attend her, the beauteous Matilda began her journey, one night, when the fierce winds ſeemed to combat the oppoſition of the lofty mountains, and the blue-tongued lightning added a double horror to the rocking of the hoarſe thunder, by affording a tranſitory glimpſe of the cloud-

capped

capped hills, and blaſted heaths. But love can do any thing. And ſhe who, in the zenith of his youth and ſplendour, would have bluſhed to have been a moment alone with Wallace, now defied every inclemency of the contending elements, to comfort and relieve him in the hour of his adverſity. Oh, Affection! vaſt are thy limits, and few can trace thy ſource! But what were the ſenſations of Matilda's ſoul, when, upon her arrival at the cottage, ſhe beheld her Wallace—once the lively, gay, and elegant! Heavens! what a change! his countenance was pale, ſave on his

his forehead, where a burning fever ſeemed to keep its ſtation; the natural luſtre of his eyes were dimmed; thoſe eyes which late had beamed, like ſuns, the rays of love and tenderneſs; and, even now, they bore reſemblance to the monarch of the day, whoſe ſolemn grandeur, in the evening, amazes without dazzling, and ſeems like the auguſt ruin of his morning glory.

He no ſooner beheld his Matilda, than a ſlight ray of that underſtanding, which for the ſpace of near two years had never viſited him,

him, ſhot a flaſh through his brain: agitated and moved, he pronounced the much-loved name; preſſed her extended hand to his lips; and then relapſed into a fit of melancholy muſing.

The humane phyſician who attended him, commanded the unhappy fair-one to quit him for that night; to which ſhe, with much reluctance, at laſt conſented; and paſſed the lingering hours of darkneſs in prayers for his recovery.

As

As ſoon as the ſhrill cock had proclaimed the approach of the morn, and the miſts being diſpelled, the lofty cliffs appeared, Matilda roſe, and, with a trembling hand and liſtening voice, knocked gently at the door of Wallace: it was opened by Agnes. "Heaven be "praiſed, Madam!" ſaid this old faithful attendant, "my young "maſter has at length recovered "his reaſon; he has been inquir-"ing for your ladyſhip, but would "not by any means permit me to "diſturb you."

The

The lovely girl made no anſwer, but ruſhed into the room, where ſhe beheld Wallace ſitting up reading a letter, upon which many a tear trickled from his fine eyes. He aſſumed a ſmile on the appearance of his beloved.

"Matilda!" cried he, "grati-
"tude cannot find words to ex-
"preſs my ſenſe of all the obliga-
"tions that I owe your goodneſs:
"my ſpirits will not——" Here ſhe ſeized his hand; and begged him, if he prized her happineſs, to calm his tranſports. Many were the affectionate inquiries on both

ſides: but ſince to a reader they may appear inſipid and unneceſſary, let it ſuffice to ſay, that, charmed by the tenderneſs of his Matilda, he ſoon recovered his reaſon, and in a little time his health returned.

But yet a ſettled melancholy mood was ſtill perceptible; and often, at the dead hour of night, he would throw himſelf upon the grave of his revered parents, and water their turf with his tears.

But the aſſiduities of Matilda, and the voice of reaſon, ſoon diſpelled

pelled his unſeaſonable anxiety, and he began to renew once more the pleaſing theme of love: for Matilda then to diſſemble, would have appeared the moſt contemptible of affectations. She wrote to her father to implore his conſent and preſence at her marriage.

Gratitude, his promiſe, friendſhip, every thing, operated too ſtrongly in the boſom of M'Dowal for him to heſitate an inſtant; and he ſallied forth immediately for the habitation of his kind preſerver, at-

tended by his two friends, Arran and Montieth.

Montieth was a youth of noble birth; and the manly qualities of his mind entitled him to all the reſpect in *peace*, which his ſword had obtained in war. He had always been inſtructed to deſpiſe titles, and conſider *virtue* alone as true *nobility*; therefore, the qualities of the father of William Wallace had afforded him a firm place in the boſom of Montieth.

Had

Had Matilda never ſeèn young Wallace, Montieth would certainly have had the preference over all his rivals: but this youth was of too generous a mind to envy William his ſucceſs; and he ſet out with M'Dowal, determined to transfer that friendſhip to the ſon which he ſo long had entertained for his unhappy father.

Far different were the ſavage reſolves of the diſappointed Arran. Matilda's preferring a peaſant to all the elegance and ſplendor his fortune would have beſtowed upon her,

wounded his pride, and his whole journey to the cottage was employed in meditating the deſtruction of the future happy huſband.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

At their arrival, Matilda flew to the arms of her father; whilſt Wallace was employed in welcoming the illuſtrious ſtrangers: he received a firm embrace of friendſhip from Montieth. Arran, too, was not wanting in his profeſſions, for

" He could look the innocent flower,
" But be the ſerpent under it." SHAKS

In a few days the ceremony was performed: Wallace forgot his griefs, and M'Dowal was as happy as friendſhip and filial affection could render him.

Matilda, poſſeſſed of every thing her ſoul deſired, performed the duties of her ſtation, and entertained her father and his gueſts, till the time drew near which was to preſent M'Dowal with an heir to his poſſeſſions. At length this joyful period arrived; and Wallace gazed with tranſport on his little Iſabella, whom

whom he had named thus out of reſpect for his mother.

Arran was almoſt ſtung to madneſs with their happineſs, and made a reſolution of betraying his own honour, his country's freedom, every thing, to gratify his love and his revenge. With this intent, he took a ſeeming friendly leave of Wallace, to ſeek the camp of Edward the Firſt, who was at that time making rapid ſtrides in reducing the Scotch to his empire.

Above

Above a year had glided away in this pleaſing ſtate of tranquillity, when the military genius of Wallace, which had been ſmothered for a while, blazed out anew, and grew ſo powerful that nothing was able to reſtrain it. His countrymen were all flocking to the ſtandard of glory, and uniting to ſhake off the oppreſſive yoke that they ſo long had groaned under. M'Dowal in vain attempted to diſſuade him from ſo dangerous an enterprize:—the words of his father vibrated in his ear—and he could not bear the thoughts of loitering his time at home,

home, when his preſence might be neceſſary for the preſervation of his country.

At times, when the ſoft converſation of Matilda would allay the flame of military ardour in his boſom, if a trumpet chanced to echo from the mountains that ſurrounded the cottage, he would graſp his ſword, and bound like the fiery courſer, who, after having grazed among the plains in idleneſs and inactivity, if by chance he hears the well-known ſignals of the battle, prances, foams, and ſnorts, then flies

flies like lightning to the ſcene of action.

So would the eyes of Wallace, at the thoughts of glory, flaſh fire, which all the tears of Matilda could not quench. He conſented, however, to deſiſt, till an illneſs which had invaded the little Iſabella had loſt its baleful force; and then determined to leave his beloved wife to the care of her father, and ſeek thoſe laurels in battle which his anceſtors had never failed to obtain. Montieth, whoſe friendſhip would never permit him to quit the

the ſide of our young hero, reſolved to accompany him.

Wallace was now juſt upon the age of manhood; and yet, although the difference between their years was ſo conſiderable, their friendſhip was as firm and permanent as any the pages of hiſtory can boaſt. Matilda, though ſhe had rejected him for a lover, eſteemed him highly as a friend; and his noble mind was ſoon conſoled for her loſs, by reflecting, that if the object of his affections was happier than he could poſſibly have made her,

her, it would be cruelty in him even to wiſh it otherwiſe.

Such were the ſentiments of a man whom no time, threats, or promiſes, could, through a long ſeries of dangers and diſappointments, ever divert from the path of friendſhip and honour.

Happineſs at length ſeemed tired of making her abode in this humble habitation; and one ſtormy evening, whilſt M'Dowal was endeavouring to perſuade Wallace to return to his caſtle, and the noble youth

youth was pleading his partiality to the roof which had ſheltered his anceſtors for ſuch a number of years, their converſation was interrupted by a ſudden thundering at the door, which was forced open; and the cottage was in an inſtant filled with Engliſh ſoldiers.

The ſwords of Wallace and Montieth were unſheathed in an inſtant; but, overpowered by numbers, they had the torture of ſeeing the venerable M'Dowal, and the ſhrieking Matilda with her in-

fant in her arms, borne away by the mercileſs ruffians.

The ſoldiers kept them confined for a conſiderable ſpace of time, till their leader entered, who was upbraided by Wallace with the title of tyrant and of raviſher: our deſperate hero curſed him, England, and its king.

Aymers (for that was the Captain's name) conducted himſelf with great humanity; aſſuring Wallace, that the royal mandate had forced him to the deed which he reviled

him

him with. But the priſoners could gain no intelligence of what was to be their future fate, farther than that they were to be led to London, and brought before the preſence of the king. Wallace exulted in the idea; and reſolved, whatever might be the conſequences, to throw his country's ſufferings in the face of Edward.

Montieth tried every method to comfort his diſtracted friend; but it was all in vain:—he raved, and vowed revenge; nor did the tempeſt of his fury abate, till he had been chained in a gloomy dungeon

for ſeveral days. At length, reflection came, like a ſoothing angel, to his aid; and the recollection of the ſituation of his wife and father, called down the ſcalding tear of anguiſh from his eye. In vain did he attempt to bribe his obdurate guard to inform him of their ſituation: the fellow, worthy of his office, preſerved a ſullen ſilence.

Montieth, dead to his own ſorrows, ſeemed only alive to the miſeries of his friend, which he took every method to alleviate; and had it not been for his ſoothing

aid,

aid, Wallace might have declined into a ſecond madneſs.

But the companion of his ſufferings ſaw, that in permitting him to brood over his ſorrows, the misfortunes of his friend were only augmented; he therefore tried every means of diverting his attention; which he effected, for ſome time, by relating his own ſtory, in the following words:

THE HISTORY OF MONTIETH.

MY father, laird Murraivan, poſſeſſed a magnificent caſtle in one

of the moſt remote parts of Scotland.

Early in life he was united to Elgiva, the daughter of a rich and powerful nobleman.

The life of Murraivan paſſed in an uninterrupted ſtream of delight; till a war breaking out with England, he was forced to part with Elgiva, and join with his brave countrymen: he there gained the higheſt praiſes both for his courage and humanity.

In the courſe of a ſiege, he had the good fortune to preſerve the life

life of Raimond, who, though well known in ſeveral former battles to be the foremoſt in the race of glory, in this action, appeared to fight like a man whoſe chief wiſh was to obtain an honourable grave.

Early in life he had fallen in love with an amiable young woman, and beheld her hurried by the hand of ſickneſs to an untimely grave, almoſt the hour ſhe had conſented to be his.

Depreſſed with bodily and mental anguiſh, he ſought the fields of ſlaughter, and there the natural

love of life gave way to the corroding ſorrows that preyed upon his heart.

Murraivan, touched with pity at his diſtreſs, endeavoured to rouze his ſpirits from the lethargy that overwhelmed them; and bore him off ſafe from a party of Engliſh, who were on every ſide furiouſly aſſailing him.

A truce being granted by the king of England for a conſiderable ſpace of time, Murraivan carried his friend Raimond down to the ſeat of his anceſtors, hoping that his own

own efforts, joined with the exertions of Elgiva, might be able to diſſipate the anxiety of his companion, and reſtore to the world a valuable and uſeful member. Thither, in a ſhort time, they both arrived, and were received with unaffected rapture by the amiable Elgiva.

Among ſeveral other dependants, who looked up to the fortune of Murraivan, was Donald, a wretch who beheld with the glance of hatred every one who ſeemed to be in the ſmalleſt degree a favourite with his maſter.

He ſaw, therefore, with inward vexation and diſappointment, the ſmiles that were ſo profuſely laviſhed, both by Murraivan and Elgiva, upon their deſponding gueſt.

Intereſt, however, was too predominant in his boſom for him to ſuffer theſe ſentiments to be known. He was one of thoſe cool villains, who, from a long obſervance of the manners of the world, diſcover, that the moſt infallible method of ruining a ſucceſsful enemy, is, to blind him, by aſſuming the maſk of friendſhip.

After

After having made a ſucceſsful attempt at gaining the confidence of the unſuſpecting Raimond, he began his maſter-plot, by divers artful inſinuations and ſhrewd hints upon the conduct of Elgiva. Theſe he inſtilled with ſuch baleful influence into the boſom of Murraivan, that, though uſually generous to a fault, he ſoon fell a prey to the artifices of his dependant; and his peace was loſt in the afflicting pangs of jealouſy.

Having proceeded thus far, Donald ſoon perceived that it would be no very difficult matter to effect his

his chief deſign, the murder of Raimond.

Elgiva would often, while the moon was ſhedding her mild beams on the awful proſpects, which, in a grand and pictureſque ſcene, ſurrounded the caſtle, withdraw her gueſt from the contemplation of his ſorrows; and as they walked together on the bridge, endeavour to divert his mind from the melancholy images he was ſo inceſſantly brooding over.

In one of theſe walks, Donald obſerved them in earneſt converſation;

tion; he haſtened to the apartment of Murravain, and drew him, as if by accident, to the ſpot.

Murraivan ſtarted at beholding them together at ſo unſeaſonable an hour; his former doubts were now confirmed, and the fatal certainty broke forth with accumulated horror over his head. He ſnatched his dagger from his boſom, and was advancing, but a moment's pauſe gave him time to reflect he was his gueſt. But has he not dared to attempt the honour of my wife, and forfeited by that action all the rights of hoſpitality? cried the unfortu-

nate

nate laird. Here a ſmile conveyed on Raimond, by the innocent Elgiva, determined his wavering reſolutions; and, ruſhing forward, he ſtabbed the unſuſpecting Raimond to the heart; he fell, and expired without a groan. A ſhriek from Elgiva called back the ſcattered ſenſes of the petrified Murraivan, who was gazing with horror on the bleeding corpſe of his murdered friend.

"Traitreſs," cried he, "now comes "thy turn!" He then raiſed his hand to execute his bloody purpoſe on her; but her beauty, her agitation, and

and his former paſſion, all operated ſo powerfully, that the dagger dropped from his hand, and he could only order Donald to confine her in her chamber till he ſhould know his farther determination.

Murraivan then retired to his couch; but his ſlumbers were interrupted by horrid phantoms; and the gaſping ſhadow of his murdered fellow-ſoldier appeared to haunt him with unceaſing vengeance.

In the morning he received a note from Elgiva, intreating him to permit her to be brought before him,

him, and conjuring him, by the life of the infant who was at that inſtant ſtruggling in her womb, to hear her with patience.

But the ſoul-tortured Murraivan, with whom, to be

"Once in doubt, was to be once reſolved,"
SHAKESPEARE.

refuſed to hear her, and returned her for anſwer, that her infant, or Raimond's infant, or no matter whoſe infant it was, muſt periſh, with its mother, as ſoon as it ſhould ſee the light.

Fright hurried on the delivery of Elgiva, and the next day ſhe was brought

brought to-bed of myſelf. But how was her love for her dear infant turned into pity and horror, when ſhe reflected upon the inhuman threat of its relentleſs father.

Her faithful attendant, M‘ Kintoſh, however, ſoon relieved her from this anxiety, by conveying me out of the caſtle by a private door; ſhe then delivered me to her huſband, who, dazzled by the ſplendor of the reward offered by my unfortunate mother, at length conceded to her plan of his bringing me up as his own ſon.

My mother, thus relieved from all anxiety on account of her infant, and depreſſed by the cruelty of her huſband, ſoon ſunk into her long-wiſhed-for grave.

Murraivan being informed that his wife and child were no more, gave himſelf up to a fit of deſpair, that ſoon put a period to his exiſtence; having firſt bequeathed to the faithleſs Donald his immenſe poſſeſſions.

In the meantime, I was bred up as the ſon of a peaſant, and my life was chiefly ſpent in attending the flocks

flocks of M'Kintoſh, my reputed father, or improving my mind in reading, to which from my earlieſt infancy I diſcovered a great propenſity.

All the neighbourhood obſerved a ſtrong reſemblance between myſelf and their late and much lamented maſter Murraivan.

Donald had heard how my mother diſpoſed of me before her death; but thinking the intereſt of M'Kintoſh too far engaged for him ever to ſuffer the truth to be known, he had reſolved, as there was not

the leaſt probability of my moleſting his intereſt, to purſue no violent meaſures againſt me.

Whenever he ſaw me, however, ſtruck with the reſemblance I bore to his former maſter, he never obſerved the ſimilitude without tokens of the ſtrongeſt horror and diſquiet.

I was, however, too much employed in the humble line of life into which it had pleaſed Providence to caſt me, to obſerve this ſtrange averſion; but ſtill kept earning my daily bread, unconſcious of the ſhock which awaited me.

One

One day, when we were celebrating the one-and-twentieth year of my age, a ſervant, breathleſs and in haſte, entered the humble habitation of M'Kintoſh, and takme by the arm, begged me, for Heaven's ſake, to make the greateſt ſpeed, and haſten to the caſtle; he then informed me, that laird Donald had been taken extremely ill, and was at that inſtant raving to ſee me.

I entered the caſtle, and hurried into the chamber of its dying owner. "God!" cried he (perceiving me

enter), "it is he himſelf, it muſt "be Murraivan. O! conſcience, "—torture,—it drives me mad,— "I cannot look on him."

Chilled with aſtoniſhment, I was about to quit the room, when he called me back; and his reaſon being, in a great meaſure, reſtored, he made known to me the melancholy ſtory of my unfortunate parents; informing me, at the ſame time, that he could not die in peace, without congratulating me as the heir of the caſtle and eſtate, of which he had ſo long defrauded me. After

ter this confeſſion his mind ſeemed to be more at eaſe, and in a few hours he breathed his laſt.

As the truth of my ſufferings was properly atteſted, I found but little difficulty in being reinſtated in my rights by the king.

I enjoyed my dignities, however, for but a very ſhort ſpace of time. Edward again provoking us to war, I was compelled, by gratitude for all his paſt favours, to join the army of my ſovereign. But having refuſed ſeveral bribes from the Engliſh commander, he made it his

chief ſtudy to deſtroy all my family, and attacking my caſtle, levelled it with the earth, and laid waſte the fertility of the plains, that both enriched and adorned the ſeat of my forefathers.

In this period of diſtreſs, I became acquainted with M'Dowal and your worthy father. Beholding Matilda, it was impoſſible to refrain from loving her; but when I ſaw her affections placed on the ſon of my much lamented companion, I call every power in heaven to witneſs I chearfully reſigned her. With the events of my life, ſince that period,

riod, you are too well acquainted; but in the midſt of our calamities, my worthy friend, we ought not to deſpair of the mercy of that Providence which never fails to reward the toils of conſcious innocence.

Here Montieth concluded; but Wallace, who had been a while both amuſed and affected by the narrative, ſoon relapſed into his former grief.

Day after day now crept ſlowly along; and they expected every moment to be led to execution, though unconſcious of any crime

that could deſerve ſo harſh a puniſhment.

A year had now elapſed, and yet they ſaw no end of their horrid confinement. Till, at length, the doors of the priſon flew open, their fetters were knocked off, and Aymer appeared to lead them to the royal preſence. They were conducted through a crowd of ſpectators, who forgot they were enemies in ſympathiſing with their misfortunes.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

EDWARD was ſeated on his throne, and ſurrounded by his guards; his lovely queen occupied his left, whilſt his right-hand ſide was crowded with the nobles of his court. At the appearance of Wallace and his friend, he aſſumed a ſtern frown, which the undaunted youths returned. The king turning to Wallace, aſked him, how he dared foment diſturb-

turbances, and ſow the ſeeds of rebellion among his ſubjects.

Wallace replied, he never yet deſerved the name of rebel; that it had always been his firm deſire to draw his ſword in the defence of his king and country.

" Traitor!" cried Edward, " your " countrymen have ſworn allegi- " ance to me."—" To their ſhame " be it ſpoken," anſwered Wallace.

" Come,

"Come, my friend!" exclaimed Montieth; "let us hear our "ſentence that this tyrant——"

Here the enraged monarch, ſtarting from his throne, commanded them to be led to inſtant execution. But his beautiful and merciful queen immediately fell upon her knees, and implored their pardons.

Edward, who could deny nothing to his Eleonora, without heſitation granting her boon, raiſed her from the ground.

"Riſe,

" Riſe, madam," ſaid he, " your " requeſt is complied with; though " their united efforts to deſtroy " my country's happineſs, cry loud- " ly for revenge. Hear me, young " men! the armaments prepared " againſt me by the French, de- " mand of me immediate oppoſi- " tion. To-morrow, both of you " ſhall have your ſtations fixed you " in my army: fight well my " battles there, and I will ſuſpend " for once the ſword of juſtice, " and ſuffer you to live."

" Fight

"Fight thy battles, tyrant!" cried the enraged Wallace; "ſoon-
"er would I turn my ſword againſt
"mine own breaſt!——Lead us to
"inſtant death!"

"Comply with their requeſt!" anſwered the king; "and ſee
"immediate execution performed
"upon his wife. Let her linger on
"the rack, till her ſufferings have
"expiated the inſolence of theſe
"madmen."

This command operated like thunder on the faculties of the unfortunate Wallace. He fell, in a ſupplicating

plicating poſture, before the man he had ſcorned; aſked pardon for his raſhneſs, and promiſed to comply with any thing, if his Matilda might but be ſaved.

Edward would have been deaf to his prayers, had not Eleonora intreated hard in the cauſe of our wretched hero. The king granted *her* requeſt; but inſiſted on *their* compliance with *his* commands, which, dreading a much greater calamity, they were forced to conſent to. And Wallace was told at his diſmiſſion, that the firſt time his zeal began to ſlacken, that moment

ment ſhould put a period to the being of Matilda.

Every conſideration appeared light to that calamity; and he reſolved to exert every nerve in the cauſe of Edward: for though he had not the conſolation of knowing what ſpot contained his beloved wife, yet it was a comfort to him to know ſhe was living.

He was ſoon after, with Montieth, placed as a common ſoldier under a man remarkable for his cruelty and oppreſſion towards his troops;

troops; and one who had never failed, during the war with Scotland, to treat his priſoners with the moſt inhuman barbarity.

The heart of Wallace leaped with indignation at receiving inſults from this *monſter;* but the thought of Matilda prevented him from reſenting his preſumption.—She operated as a charm upon his imagination; and he began his march fully reſolved to ſignalize himſelf as much as poſſible, hoping by theſe means to gain over the heart of Edward to his intereſt; that, pleaſed

with his efforts, he might reſtore to his arms their long-loſt treaſure.

Their march was both tedious and dangerous. Montieth and Wallace bore their hardſhips without complaining—hardſhips which every ſoldier was exempted from: yet would their barbarous ſuperior continually invent ſome pretext for maltreating them; every fault committed in the camp was ſet down as an article againſt them, and which they were obliged to anſwer.

Thrice had the ſword of Wallace been drawn againſt his barbarous perſecutor, when the image of Matilda deſcended to calm his rage.

At length, tidings were brought of the approach of the French army. The men were marſhalled into order: the inhuman Lawrence (that was the leader's name) placed our friends in a ſtation where it would be a miracle if they eſcaped with life. This was, to Wallace, the greateſt favour the wretch could have conferred upon him. He, poor youth, ſaw but little comfort in a life whoſe dawn had been obſcured

with

with clouds, and the ſhort ſunſhine of his fortune had only conduced to make the black ſtorm that now hovered over him *doubly terrible.* He had nothing but his Matilda to live for; and, ſpite of his anxiety, the pleaſing thought of being re-united to her, reſolved him to try to drag on this miſerable exiſtence a little longer.

Lawrence, with an inſolent air, demanded of Wallace, if his cold country could produce any thing with warmth enough to fight when they had no mountains to ſculk behind? The indignant youth ſhot

a glance of diſdain at the propoſer of the degrading queſtion; and told him he ſhould ſhortly be convinced.

The ſignal was given; the drums and trumpets imitated the bellowing of the hoarſe thunder. In an inſtant, the ſhrieks of the wounded tranſpierced the air on every ſide: —the courage of Lawrence failed; and he was overcome by a deadlike paleneſs. Wallace obſerved the ſudden alteration of his countenance with pleaſure; when, turning round to him, he cried, "Now, Sir, if you "ſuſpect the courage of a Scotch-

" man, follow us!" So ſaying, he ſprung forward, with Montieth, towards the ſpot where ſlaughter ſeemed moſt buſy. The aſtoniſhed Frenchmen fell, like ſummer corn precipitated by the ſcythe, before their fury. On a ſudden, Wallace beheld the Engliſh ſtandard borne triumphantly away by the exulting enemy. He flew like lightning: —the frightened Frenchmen thought ſome angel fought againſt their hopes. They dropped the ſtandard; and *he* thought himſelf happy who could firſt eſcape the unerring ſword of this dreadful enemy. Their ranks were broken; and the Bri-

tiſh forces ruſhed, like a roaring torrent from the lofty mountains, down on the flying enemy. The victory was decided in favour of the troops of Edward.

After the battle, the elated general iſſued a proclamation, offering a great reward to any one who could produce the ſoldier who ſo bravely had redeemed the Engliſh ſtandard; Wallace immediately appeared before him bluſhing, and bowed reſpectfully.

Lawrence, aſtoniſhed at his (as he ſuppoſed) preſumption, deſcribed him

him as an idle coward, come with an intention to defraud the real hero of the reward; whom he declared had periſhed juſt as he atchieved the *glorious enterpriſe*.

Wallace, undaunted by this ſtroke of malice, walked coolly to an adjacent tent, and brought forth the ſtandard, as a certain proof of his veracity. The general ſmiled; and would directly have promoted him, but his conſtant enemy interpoſed; and, vexed at the inſult he had received in the heat of the battle, revenged himſelf, by informing the

general, that Wallace was a Scotchman.

The commander immediately withdrew his promiſes; declaring, that it was more than he could anſwer to his king, to promote any Scotchman; that he had received orders from him not to honour any of that nation, whom he conſidered in no other light than dangerous rebels.

Wallace left him with an air of diſdain, which made the general as much his enemy as Lawrence; and they

they concerted means how they might beſt endanger his life.

Lawrence reſolved to rouze his fiery ſpirit, by affronting him; and as he knew his haughty temper could not brook an inſult, he hoped, that by provoking him to ſtrike him, the laws of war might rid him of his enemy.

The general conſented to this infernal ſcheme, which Lawrence undertook to put into execution.

Wallace, in the mean time, though burning with contempt, performed the

the orders of his officers like an able ſoldier; and, in the friendſhip of Montieth, never failed to find a conſolation for all the viciſſitudes of his hard fortune: at length, the following accident hurried on the grand criſis of his fate.

The chance of war had caſt many priſoners into the hands of the Engliſh. Theſe unhappy men Wallace always endeavoured to comfort and relieve. The child of misfortune himſelf, his manly heart never failed to bleed in the contemplation of the miſeries of another.

Among

Among the priſoners, he obſerved one who, though in the garb of a common ſoldier, yet by his countenance betrayed an exalted mind, and appeared like a grand edifice which the hand of time had been able to deface though not entirely to deſtroy. To the wants of this venerable captive Wallace was particularly attentive; and would often, at the hazard of his life, convey that ſuccour to him, without whoſe aſſiſtance he muſt have quickly bended to his grave.

The ſtranger returned his attentions with that grateful tranſport with

with which noble minds always receive an obligation; and, won by his frequent intreaties, at length conſented to relate the hiſtory of his life. "A hiſtory," cried he, "ſo melancholy, that I am afraid "you will think it but a poor "reward for all your goodneſs."

Wallace bowed, and begged he might be indulged with the recital. The ſtranger looked on his fetters, dropped a tear upon them, and then, ſeating himſelf on a bundle of ſtraw, recited the hiſtory which the reader will find in the beginning of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

THE HISTORY OF ALVARO, THE UNFORTUNATE SPANIARD.

THOUGH I am now a partaker of the calamities of France, I owe my birth to Spain; where I was born the heir to a conſiderable fortune. My youth was an unvaried ſcene of happineſs; and the firſt miſery my infant boſom ever experienced, was the loſs of my poor

poor mother; for my father had been buried before I had an underſtanding ſufficiently ripened to feel his loſs.

Afflicted for a while, I bent with anguiſh over my mother's tomb; till an old friend, to diſſipate my grief, perſuaded me to paſs a month or two with him at Portugal. There I firſt ſaw his ward Antonia. Bleſſed be the Providence that ſnatched her from theſe arms before ſhe ſaw that endleſs miſery that has with conſtant ſtep attended her unhappy huſband!——Here I muſt pauſe to pay the tribute of a tear

to

to the memory of the beſt wife that ever bleſſed a huſband's arms. It would be tedious to relate our courtſhip: ſuffice it, that before a month expired the prieſt had made us one.

Another year bleſſed us (for we then thought it a bleſſing) with a daughter.—Louiſa grew in wiſdom and in beauty. Oh! with what tranſports have I gazed on her!—perceived her mother's virtues growing in her heart!—and ſpent the day enlivened with her preſence alone!

Soon

Soon my Antonia ſought thoſe bliſsful regions, for which alone ſhe was adapted. Had not my daughter ſtayed my reſolution, I ſhould have followed her; grief would have broke a heart which now, verſed in wretchedneſs, continues ſtubbornly to vibrate, and detain me on this ſcene of miſery. But I muſt tire you.—Lorenzo, the prince of Spain, was a youth endowed with every qualification to pleaſe a woman's heart; he had ſeduced the wary and the wiſe from virtue's thorny path. How then could I expect that a weak and unexperienced girl ſhould have the reſo-

reſolution to reſiſt the charms of this youth.

Bernard, the mean paraſite of this prince, found means to gain admittance to my daughter; talked of his maſter's virtues and accompliſhments in ſuch a ſtrain, that even before ſhe *ſaw*, ſhe *loved* him.

But when ſhe beheld him ſhining in all the elegance of faſhion, and verſed in all the arts of flattery and ſeduction, her eaſy heart was won by his appearance; and virtue, peace, and happineſs, all went to wreck together.

Lorenzo ſoon found means to lure her from the counſels of a father; and in his palace drowned a while the clamours of her conſcience with luxury and ſplendour.

Almoſt mad with fear, I hurried, diſtracted, through every ſtreet in Spain, enquiring for my daughter, but without the leaſt ſucceſs. At length the fatal tidings reached my ears, that my daughter had for a twelve-month been the prince's—O! diſhonour to my name! I muſt not, cannot ſpeak the cruel word. I flew directly to the palace-gate, demanded entrance, fought the prince's

prince's chamber; he ſeemed ſurpriſed at my appearance. "Draw, "wretch!" cried I, "and to an in-"jured father make atonement for "his daughter's ruin."

He attempted to pacify me; but I ſtill perſiſted in demanding ſatisfaction for my wrongs; till he at length conſented to appeaſe my injured honour by marrying Louiſa. I ſaw no other way of recovering her reputation, and therefore was obliged to ſubmit.

I refuſed to ſee her, and haſtened home, where my mind was ſome-

what more at eaſe; but ſoon a dangerous fever preyed upon me, and I was forced to keep my *bed* for full two months. On my recovery I heard that the old king was dead, and that Lorenzo was buſy in preparing both for his wedding and the coronation.

At length the day arrived, and I confeſs, offended as I was, my heart yet leaped with joy at the fond thought of ſeeing my Louiſa a queen. I fled to be preſent at the ceremony; but, O! conceive my rage and indignation when I beheld

held the perjured prince leading another woman to the altar.

I haſtened to the chamber of Louiſa at the palace, reſolved to pardon all my ſufferer's faults, and claſp my repentant daughter in my old arms again. I bade the ſervant lead me to her room; but, O! horrid recollection! ſhe no ſooner beheld me entering, than ſtaggering to the other end of the apartment, ſhe drew a dagger from her girdle, and, ſhrieking, plunged the fatal weapon in her breaſt.

"Now," cried ſhe, "I hope I "have atoned for all; this dagger "was intended for Lorenzo; but "I have only now my own crimes "to anſwer for. Forgive me, Sir, "and let the tear of pity waſh away "all the ſtains of my guilt." She groaned and expired. I ſnatched the dagger in my trembling hand, and ran to ſeek the prince; I met him ſurrounded by his courtiers; prevented from my grand revenge, I had only the conſolation of devoting the curſed Bernard to my fury.

The

The youthful king at firſt commanded me to execution; but he was not merciful enough to kill me at once, but changed my ſentence to perpetual baniſhment; ſtripped me of all my wealth, and ſent me, old and poor, a wandering beggar to an unfeeling world. But Heaven's curſe ſoon after lighted on his head; his wife, in a fit of jealouſy, mingled poiſon in the cup from which he drank. May Heaven pardon his ſins! I do not triumph in his end. A charitable merchant conveyed me paſſage-free to France; but unknowing how to earn my bread, I liſted as a ſoldier under the Imperial ſtandard.

You know the fate we met with, and I need not tell the reſt. O! may Heaven bleſs you for your goodneſs; this poor old heart, long cold to every thing, almoſt, but grief, now finds a place for gratitude; and I truſt that Being, who looks with pleaſure on the beneficent feelings of a heart like yours, will hear my prayers, and ſhield you from every danger.

Here the old man left off ſpeaking, and the manly countenance of Wallace was bedewed with the tears of generous ſympathy; when Laurence entered the priſon, attended by

by a file of ſoldiers, and demanded the reaſon of his finding him there. Wallace returned no anſwer, except a look of contempt; Laurence, enraged at his indifference, ſtruck him.

Wallace's blood ruſhed into every part of his body at this inſult, and his paſſion conquering every other feeling in his boſom, at one blow he brought the aggreſſor to his feet; the ſoldiers were alarmed by the fury of his looks, and ſcuffled to get out of the priſon, leaving their officer to his enraged enemy; who,

irritated

irritated by the frequent ill treatment he had received from his proſtrate ſuperior, could no longer contain his ardent deſire of returning his cruelty. He ran to the door, and ſeized a ſpear from the hand of Montieth, who, having heard the ſtory from one of the ſoldiers who was preſent, had haſtened to aſſiſt his friend. Wallace deſired him to remain there a few minutes, and returning, inflicted ſuch a puniſhment with the wooden part of the ſpear upon the ſides of Laurence, that pain got the better of his natural cowardice, and he

ſtarted

ſtarted up, with his ſword drawn in his hand. Wallace's eyes ſparkled with pleaſure—each flew to his target, and the attack began.

In vain did Alvaro attempt to ſeparate them—ſtroke followed ſtroke. Laurence, at one furious blow, ſplit the ſhield of his enemy, which, flying to pieces, left our hero naked to his fury. Laurence flung his ſword backwards to ſtrike the fatal blow; but Wallace nimbly wheeled round, and pierced the diſappointed barbarian through the throat:

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throat: he fell to the ground, and, with a grin of malice, breathed his *laſt*.

Wallace immediately hurried to Montieth, and told him of what he had done; and they haſtened to the ſtables where the horſes were kept, and mounting two of the ſwifteſt, reſolved to make the beſt of their way to England, till the rage of purſuit ſhould be over; or, if they could not lie concealed there, to eſcape to Scotland, and try to animate their ſinking countrymen to ſtrike another blow for liberty.

liberty. They ſpurred their horſes, till they arrived at the place from whence the French packets were accuſtomed to ſet off. In one of theſe they croſſed the ſea, and in a ſhort time landed ſafely at a little ſea-port town in England.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

UPON their firſt arrival, as they were walking along the ſtrand, they thought they heard a voice behind them which they knew; and upon turning round, beheld the old admirer of Matilda, Arran. He ſeemed aſtoniſhed, and ſtarted at beholding them. Wallace embraced, and demanded of him, how he came to England. Arran heſitated; but at length informed them, that he was come to levy forces

forces among their diſperſed countrymen, and try their inclinations. If he found them ready to lend their aid, he ſaid, that it was his intention to ſet on foot a glorious undertaking.

Wallace earneſtly begged to know what he meant, when Arran informed him, that as Scotland long had groaned beneath the tyranny of Engliſh Edward, he hoped to perſuade them to revolt; and he was ſure, if Wallace would appear to head the peaſants, they would ſoon rouſe, and drive the uſurpers from their territories.

Our hero caught fire, and embraced the propoſer of this plan with all the ardor of friendſhip; who, triumphing in his artifice, returned it with a well-feigned warmth. The friends of Wallace and Montieth were all written to, informed of the deſign, and deſired to aſſemble, and enliſt as many of the ſurrounding villagers as poſſible in the deſign, againſt their return.

The breaſt of Wallace now beat high with the idea of approaching liberty; eſpecially, when the diſſembling Arran informed him, that Matilda

Matilda had eſcaped, and taken her reſidence in a nunnery at Spain, till ſhe might with ſafety return to his arms.

Her brave huſband had now no tie to bind him to the cauſe of Edward. Freedom dawned on his mind, and elevated his countenance. He wrote continually to his friends in Scotland, who, by every poſt, expreſſed their anxiety for his preſence to head them. Montieth was ſent to London, to prepare ſwords and other warlike implements for the little army.

Our hero was delighted with theſe pleaſing circumſtances; when, as he was walking, admiring the gentle ſwelling ocean, a man rode up to him with a pair of boots and a ſilver ſpur. The fellow ſaid he came from Montieth, who returned many thanks to Wallace for the loan of them, and had deſired him (the meſſenger) to make all poſſible haſte. The mind of Wallace immediately diſcovered the myſtery; he rewarded the meſſenger, and diſmiſſed him. The boots being an emblem of flight, he feared his ſcheme might be betrayed; ſo croſſed the ſea immediately

ately for Scotland, where he arrived juſt as the ſetting-ſun was tinging the cliffs with burniſhed gold. The ſafety of Montieth now engaged all his attention; but juſt as he attained his little cottage, he perceived a ſteed drop down dead before him, and the rider jumping off; in a moment he recognized the perſon of his friend. Many were the congratulations on their mutual ſafety; which being paſt, Montieth began to explain the cauſe of his extraordinary meſſage. "When I arrived in London," ſaid he, "I found the ſoldiers preparing "their arms, the citizens ſcouring "up their ruſty ſwords, and the

" whole town in confuſion. Upon " enquiry, they informed me, " that a Scottiſh gentleman, named " Arran, had laid open to the king " ſome great conſpiracy his coun- " trymen were preparing; that all " letters were to be opened, and " every precaution taken to diſ- " cover the ringleaders; one of " whom, meaning *you*, was to be " ſent after the next day.

" I knew it would have been " madneſs to have waited for you; " ſo I turned my ſteed for flight, " and at a little inn pulled off my " boots and ſent them to you; my

" artifice

" artifice ſucceeded, and I am paid " for all my anxiety." Wallace embraced the faithful partner of his dangers, and thanked him for his fidelity; at the ſame time expreſſing his indignation at the treacherous conduct of Arran.

It was now ſeven years ſince Wallace had ſeen his Matilda, and the eighth of his infant's age; therefore it was natural that his heart yearned to behold them; but Arran had denied his knowledge of the convent that contained her, and the attempt of ſeeing her would have been fool-hardineſs.

The next morning our hero, attended by his friend, reviewed the little troop he had been endeavouring to collect, and found that, by the diligence of the natives of his village, he was at the head of an army of three hundred and ſixty brave fellows, ready to live or die with him.

Wallace walked up and down the ranks, exhorting them to let nothing depreſs their ſpirits, but to gather courage from the juſtice of the cauſe they were engaged in. And hence ſprang one of the greateſt wonders in the pages of hiſtory, that

that a ſingle man, aided by a few ſtraggling villagers, ſhould have made the king of England tremble, and perform greater actions, for the good of his country, than his monarch ever could atchieve, aided by the flower of his nobility and a ſurpriſing army. His words operated upon his bold confederates like fire on gunpowder, and all unanimouſly reſolved never to quit his ſide. Montieth ſhed tears of unaffected joy at the pathetic ſcene; and the rough inhabitants of the Highlands, albeit unuſed to the melting mood, could not reſtrain the ſtream that ſeemed to ruſh by inſtinct from

their eyes; the hills re-echoed with their ſhouts, and Wallace was proclaimed a Prince, a God, a Saviour of his country. The next morning they were commanded to prepare for their march; and Wallace, after he had ranged them in their ranks, and bowed to every individual, commanded ſilence, and began as follows:

" *My gallant friends and coun-
" trymen, were I not convinced of
" your attachment to the glorious
" cauſe in which you have engaged
" yourſelves, I would not vainly
" graſp the ſhadow for the ſub-

* See Salluſt.

" ſtance,

" ſtance, but have ſuffered this glo-
" rious opportunity of liberty and
" vengeance to paſs unheeded by
" me; but I am firmly ſatisfied
" your ſpirits ſpurn at tyranny, and
" only need a head to ſpirit you,
" under whoſe banners you may
" compel theſe ſpoilers of your coun-
" try to relinquiſh their invaſions.
" You want no motives to ſpirit you
" to action; theſe devouring Engliſh
" ſeize on your wealth, your wives,
" your children, even before your
" faces. And will you bear theſe
" injuries, my countrymen? No,
" let us rather ſeek a glorious grave,
" than tamely bow our heads to
" thoſe

" thoſe who injure us. I am re-
" ſolved to dedicate my life to your
" ſervice: if you can find another
" abler man (as there no doubt are
" many), to him I willingly will
" yield my office; conſider me
" which way you think moſt pro-
" per, in either capacity I will la-
" bour *, watch, fight, and die for
" you."

* As general or ſoldier.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

THE applauding multitude threw up their caps, and hailed him as their general; he then commanded them to be in readineſs the next morning for their march. They left him with every appearance of joy and ſatisfaction. Wallace ſpent the evening in the moſt pleaſing contemplations; he made no doubt of being able to reduce the king of England to his terms, and place his ſovereign upon the long

long loſt ſeat of glory of his anceſtors. The thought of again claſping his Matilda animated him with the moſt heroic ardour; and though the tempeſtuous morning ſeemed to lower upon his deſign, he began his march with the moſt apparent ſatisfaction, and bended his courſe towards the town of London, whoſe gates he intended to ſtorm.

Through every little village that he paſſed, all the young heroes of the place flocked to his ſtandard; and before he had proceeded five hundred miles, his mere handful of men were increaſed to above ſix thou-

thouſand; but when he paſſed through the capital towns, numbers of the nobility, with all their followers, took their ſtations under him.

England, terrified, heard of this army, which had now pierced into the middle of the Scotch territories; but the active Edward ſoon levied a force ſufficient to oppoſe them; and the royal warrior himſelf headed his yet victorious troops. Another party was ſent out to ſcour the country, and haraſs the enemy as much as poſſible.

Wallace

Wallace had now finiſhed the beſt part of his journey, when ſurpriſed with the intelligence of the invaſion's being retorted upon himſelf: but his hopes were too ſanguine to be diſmayed at this news; he therefore cheared his wearied men in a glowing and pathetic ſpeech, and ordered them to wait, like heroes, the approach of the foe. His command over their affections was ſo great, that now, inſtead of fear, they beheld with pleaſure the approaching war, and waited with impatience and anxiety the ſignal of attack.

One

One of the noble partiſans of Wallace poſſeſſed a caſtle in the neighbourhood, to which they all repaired, reſolving to defend it to the laſt drop of their bloods. At length the hour arrived; the Engliſh army were in view, and their forces ſeemed to double thoſe of the undiſciplined troops of Wallace.

At their firſt appearance, the brave Highlanders drew forth their broadſwords, and would willingly have begun an immediate attack; but the flag of truce was waved by an Engliſh officer, who, through a ſpeaking-trumpet, craved admittance to the

the caſtle; the Scotch chiefs conſented, firſt having blinded the meſſenger, fearing that he might diſcover the ſecrets of the fortification.

In this manner he was conducted to the hall, where Wallace ſat in conſultation with the noble patrons of his deſigns. The knight, being freed from his bandage, diſcovered the features of Aymers; Wallace roſe, and made his reſpects to him.

Aymers begged, that if any part of his ſpeech ſhould give them offence,

fence, it might not be conſidered as proceeding from him, but from his king, whoſe orders he was forced to execute; which all having approved the juſtice of, Aymers began a long proclamation, which contained, in the name of Edward the Firſt, king of England and Scotland, a full pardon to all the aſſociates of the conſpiracy, which, his majeſty was convinced, Wallace alone had promoted, if they would inſtantly load with irons and deliver the traitor into his royal hands; threatening them with the moſt cruel tortures, if they heſitated an

hour. Aymers then ſaid, he was commanded to place before their eyes the folly of oppoſing a power that almoſt trebled theirs.

The friends of Wallace would, notwithſtanding their promiſes, immediately have ſacrificed the bearer of this inſulting meſſage to their fury, had not our hero interpoſed, and begged them not to violate the law of nations; and commanding that the ambaſſador ſhould have every attendance, promiſed him an anſwer before the riſing ſun ſhould yoke his ſteeds in the enſuing morn.

The morning arrived, and Aymers was ſummoned to appear before the aſſembly, who delivered a roll of paper into his hands, and conducted him out in the ſame manner that he had entered.

Aymers ſoon made his appearance before the Engliſh king. "Well, "Knight," cried Edward, "have "they ſent the traitor back in fet- "ters, according to my com- "mands?" The ambaſſador bowed, and ſubmiſſively delivered the paper into the hand of his Imperial maſter. Edward returned it, and ordered him to read it aloud. The

Knight opened the ſcroll, and pronounced the following words before all the ſoldiers, who had previouſly been ordered to attend:

THE ANSWER.

" When Edward ceaſes to enter-
" tain the ſentiments of a tyrant,
" then will the friends of Wallace
" deſiſt to act like men; but in
" theſe words we ſafely *may pro-*
" *nounce a*

" NEVER."

All the paſſions of the human breaſt, at that moment, crowded into the mind of Edward; he raved, and ſwore he would that very even-

ing

ing attack the fortreſs of the enemy. In vain his friends attempted to diſſuade him from ſo raſh an enterpriſe. The torrent of his rage was like a ſtream, which, having burſt the barriers that oppoſed its force, ruſhes more dreadful from its former confinement, and ſweeps the yielding trees in its tempeſtuous courſe.

So operated the paſſions of the furious Edward; no one had courage to oppoſe his orders; and the camp in an inſtant, in gloomy murmurs, foretold the impending ſtorm. The chiefs fitted their armours,

capariſoned their ſteeds, and it was a univerſal ſcene of buſtle and preparation.

Nor were the troops of Wallace inactive all this time; Montieth, who ſcorned all danger, to ſecure the glory of his friend, mingled (in a diſguiſe) among the thickeſt of the Engliſh, and brought back to his expectant aſſociates notice of the ſiege their enemy prepared.

Wallace began to make every preparation for their reception, and reſolved to return the plot of Edward with a plot. The men were ordered

ordered to feign aſleep, till the enemy, who, unſuſpecting of the diſcovery of their ſchemes, ſhould have ſent the beſt part of their troops over the draw-bridge; then to ſtart, jerk the bridge up, and encloſe the aſtoniſhed enemy, who then muſt fall an eaſy prey to their victorious ſwords.

Theſe orders were ſtrictly obſerved; a watch was ſet, who in the dead of night perceived the enemies advancing; one ſkulked and climbed up the walls, then deſcended and made the ſign of ſafety

to his comrades, who, troop by troop, walked ſlowly over the bridge; above half of them had accompliſhed their aim, when the drums ſounded from the garriſon, and the bridge was hauled up.

Edward, who felt the motion, had juſt recollection enough to plunge himſelf into the ſurrounding moat, and arrived on ſhore time enough, though unable to aſſiſt, yet forced to behold, the flower of his army caught in their own ſnare, and falling eaſy victims to the fury of their exulting enemies.

The

The Engliſh ſoldiers, ſurpriſed and confounded, dropped their ſwords, and begged for mercy, in tones of the moſt humiliating ſupplication. Wallace ordered his ſoldiers to ſtay the hand of ſlaughter, and commanded the chief of the Engliſh forces to be brought before him; his order was obeyed, and in the commander he beheld the very general who with *Laurence* had ſo meanly contrived againſt his life: his downcaſt eyes and trembling limbs confeſſed his fear of ſuffering for his baſeneſs; but how agreeably was his anxiety diſſipated, when Wallace, approaching,

ing, kindly took him by the hand, and begged him not to let the rigours of his fate depreſs his ſpirits. "The chance of war," cried he, "has caſt you into my hands, but "we Scotchmen make it as much "our boaſt to treat our enemies "with kindneſs, when fortune has "thrown them into our power, as "to make them tremble at us when, "at the head of an army, they diſ-"pute it."

The General bluſhed and bowed; Wallace ordered him to be conducted to a handſome apartment, and treated with the greateſt reſpect; then

then calling a council of his officers, and placing the ſoldiers in a circle, began the following ſpeech:

" FRIENDS AND FELLOW-SOLDIERS,

" Fortune has ſmiled upon our " juſt endeavours, and ſeems to give " a happy omen of our future vic- " tories; but let not this advantage " betray you into a blind ſecurity; " for while the ſun illuminates the " plain, the clouds may be ready " to guſh their concealed torrents; " and a good ſailor, when the ocean " ſwells gentleſt, moſt ſuſpects a " ſtorm. But I am wandering from " my purpoſe, which is to beg that

" all

" all our priſoners may be uſed like
" *men;* for though they are our
" foes, I hope you ſtill conſider them
" as fellow-creatures: our ſwords
" are drawn againſt oppreſſion;
" how then can we expect ſucceſs,
" if we ourſelves become oppreſſors?
" To you who bear exalted ranks
" in this great enterpriſe, I truſt
" this caution is unneceſſary; but
" to the lower order I addreſs my-
" ſelf.

" Your bravery, my friends, at
" leaſt has equalled that of your
" ſuperiors; and I am confident
" you will be convinced that va-
" lour

" lour never looks ſo beautiful as
" when adorned with mercy; then
" treat your priſoners like brothers,
" and ſet them an example of cle-
" mency; if ever fate ſhould caſt
" you in their powers, they will
" be compelled, by every dictate of
" gratitude and humanity, to return
" your favours.

" I have but one thing more to
" ſay, and then, with all good
" wiſhes, I diſmiſs you for the night.
" Some of my brave companions
" may miſconſtrue this precaution,
" and blame it as a baſe ſuſpicion
" of the natural goodneſs of their
" hearts.

" hearts. No, my brave fellows,
" I have tried them, and they have
" always riſen ſuperior from the
" teſt; love for me might have in-
" duced you, againſt your natures,
" to have made uſe of cruelties,
" which, though theſe Engliſh-
" men have execiſed upon you,
" admit of no execuſe. But here,
" to vindicate my character, I
" openly declare before you all, it
" is my command, that every pri-
" ſoner be treated with reſpect, and
" he who meanly condeſcends to
" uſe reproach againſt his creſt-
" fallen enemy, is from that inſtant
" an Engliſhman to me. If any
" captive

" captive complains of injury, I " ſtand as an impartial judge, and " redreſs is open to him. And now, " my friends, I beg that as ye your- " ſelves hope pardon for your ſins, " you will endeavour to ſhew your " enemies, you ſcorn to wound their " ſouls with any thing but kindneſs." He finiſhed, and every ſoldier having promiſed to obey his orders; and the watch being ſet, they all retired to reſt.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.